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# The Haunted House

HENRY PERCIVAL SPENCER





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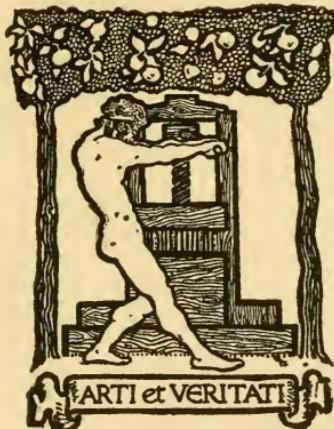




# THE HAUNTED HOUSE

HENRY PERCIVAL SPENCER

*Author of "The Lilies"*



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## THE HAUNTED HOUSE

In an orchard grim and lonely,  
    Stands the Haunted House alone;  
And the marsh winds go by only,  
    And they sigh—and they groan,  
And receive no other answer but a moan.

Every stunted tree is rotten,  
    Full of wrinkles and of holes,  
Long neglected and forgotten  
    Save by cats—and by moles,  
And the nasty, sickly wheezing of lost souls.

Here is murder undiscovered,  
    Rape, and suicide and greed;  
Here are bodies still uncovered  
    Save by dust—and by weed,  
And no other quilt or cover do they need.

And the dews their bones besprinkle  
    Till they glisten in the light,  
And the glow-worms crawl and twinkle  
    Where their skulls—glimmer bright,  
Unprotested, unmolested, day and night.

Not a wanderer who pauses  
    In the night time or the day,  
For no matter what the cause is,  
    He will stop—nor will stay,  
But will hurry on his journey fast away.

Not a bird will hunt the grasses  
Save the whippoorwill and owl,  
Not a dog nor bitch that passes  
But will howl—and will growl,  
For upon the door-nail hangeth a black cowl.

And it tells of hasty murder  
Of a stifled, smothered cry,  
Of a shriek (and no one heard her!)  
Of a blow!—of a sigh!  
And all wonder why they shudder passing by.

Now the night winds stoop and whisper,  
Just as if they were to blame,  
And they try to speak and lisp her  
Pretty name—lovely name,  
While they shiver, while they quiver as with  
shame.

And the muskrat dives and splashes,  
When the moon is in the sky,  
And the swamp bug's fire flashes  
On the ground—and on high,  
And the crickets, bugs and beetles cry and  
cry.

And a gloomness is prevailing  
With the flitting of the bats,  
With the croaking and the wailing  
Of the toads—and the cats,  
And the ramper and the scamper of the rats.

Oh I fear me, fear me, fear me!  
Whether late or whether soon,  
That a soul will wander near me  
With a cry—like a loon,  
With a squeaking and a shrieking out of tune.

And no shadow by me reeling  
But a tremor fills my soul  
As a vampire near me stealing  
With one eye—like a coal,  
With a trowel, a rope, a towel and a pole.

And I know;—for once I wandered  
By this desolated spot,  
Long I sat and long I pondered,  
Till I dreamed—and forgot,—  
Till I saw a demon squirming through a knot.

Then one followed, and another,  
Slipping, sliding to the ground;  
Each one jostling the other  
As their tails—swished around,  
As they hurried, as they scurried to a mound.

There were ghosts of those unburied,  
Some were timid, some were bold,  
Some were single, some were married,  
Some were young—some were old,  
And they mumbled and they grumbled as  
with cold.

There were sober ones, and drinkers,  
Politicians,—men of pride,

There were nuns, and priests and tinkers,  
And a maid—still a bride,  
With a howling unborn baby at her side.

As their leader marched a poet  
And they followed one by one,  
And he kicked the mound to show it,  
As they passed—on the run,  
For the dancing and the prancing had begun.

As they twisted, twirled and wriggled,  
From the mound there came a wail,  
But they only mocked and giggled  
As they danced—in the dale,  
Where the Haunted House and orchard glim-  
mered pale.

And the stars were brightly beaming,  
And the mists were on the land,  
And the spider webs were gleaming  
As they danced—hand in hand,  
To the music of a bug and beetle band.

And they clinked their ghostly glasses,  
And they drank their ghostly ale,  
And they chanted ghostly masses  
With a croon—and a wail,  
Like the sighing of the rigging in a gale.

Then was heard a muffled tussle  
As one fettered, strives to creep,  
And a soft indefinite rustle

As one turns—when asleep,  
Then a thud, as if 'twere useless—save to  
weep.

Then again that nervous rustle,  
As a sleeper in unrest,  
As the twitching of each muscle  
From the heel—to the breast,  
When we dream of death and dying—and the  
rest.

And the horned owl shouted “Listen:  
Hear the dead one in the mound.”  
(And his eyes began to glisten,  
These he rolled—all around),  
“Nor was body, soul or spirit ever found.

“She was buried as she slumbered,  
While her life was still in bloom,  
While her days were yet unnumbered  
By the Fates—on the loom:  
She was buried living, breathing—in a tomb.

“In a tomb so deeply hidden  
No one finds her sleeping there,  
Every element forbidden,  
All the dews—and the air,  
Not a living atom near her anywhere:

“And forever, and forever  
She lies buried underground.  
To be free her one endeavor,  
None have looked—none have found,  
None will liberate her spirit from the mound.”

And the owl resumed his reading  
From a hoary book of age,  
With the bearing and the breeding  
Of a seer—of a sage,  
As he rolled his eyes in pleasure or in rage.

Thus they gamboled till the morning  
Put them headlong into flight,  
And they left without a warning,  
As they slipped—out of sight,  
As they vanished with the coming of the light.

And the earth showed no impresses  
Where their feet had lately trod,  
By the mound, where no one guesses  
What is hid—'neath its sod,  
Overshadowed by the yellow golden-rod.

The moonlight waned, the stone, gray hearth  
grew cold,  
And silently the stars fled one by one,  
As darkness faltered in the silver fold  
Of morn, which stole before the drowsy sun.

The blackbird's song, unfinished, startling  
woke  
The sleepy thrush to maddening melody,  
And morning zephyrs, creeping by the oak,  
Brought Nature's incense from the orchard  
tree;

And left their April perfumes in her hair  
As she half trembled, when the oriole  
Gave all his liquid cadence to the air,  
Like some sweet poet giving all his soul.

And as the first sunbeams shot to the skies,  
There on her couch she opened her bright  
eyes.

The last wind lingered on the water's breast,  
Which shone with crimson glory 'neath a sky  
That seemed afire. In the tinted west  
The blushing clouds hung motionless and  
high.

From forest depth and mead, by bush and  
stream,  
Poured melodies from many a woodland  
throat;  
The blue-bell, half awake and half adream,  
Trembled, as if it heard each tender note:

And from the mountains to the waves below  
A silvery mist dampered the evening air,  
And she, with lips like a red rose ablow,  
On bended knee breathed forth her evening  
prayer.

One wavelet leaped to touch her flowing  
gown,  
One star came out and tenderly looked down.

O Day, thy steps are sweet but dilatory,  
I long for Night and his unnumbered eyes :  
Thou speak'st of life, but he—of Paradise,  
Of love, of peace in death when life is hoary.  
I read it in the shadow's mystic story;  
I hear it when the night-bird softly cries ;  
I see it in the twilight's purple skies,  
And breathe it when the stars are in their  
glory.

Thou hast thy morn of joy, thy pensive noon,  
Thy sweet decline before the evening moon ;  
But Night is a long sleep of peaceful rest ;  
The robin sings thy advent and thy death,

But oh how sweet his evensong—the breath  
That wafts us to the Night's enchanted breast.

## BENNY LEE

O why, my laddie, why away  
And leave your father's side?  
You're like the wind in winter time  
And restless as the tide.  
O why, my laddie, why away  
And leave the willow's shade?  
They're plowing in the meadow lot  
Beside the lower glade.

The orchard blossoms all in white,  
In honor of the May;  
And now it is "To bed my lads,  
And up at break o' day."  
They plant the yellow corn, the oats,  
The barley, rye, and wheat;  
For all the violets bud again  
And make the wood paths sweet.

So why, my laddie, why away  
And leave your father's side?  
You're like the wind in winter time,  
And restless as the tide.

The phoebe's nest beneath the bridge,  
The swallows by the eaves,  
The spider weaves a dewy web,  
The squirrels cull the leaves;  
The rabbits mate within the wood,  
The sap runs in the tree,  
And what, my father, what is to—  
Become of Benny Lee?

The robin chirps a merry note,  
The brooks are full of foam,  
Even the goose flies from the South  
To wander and to roam.  
I go to court a smiling lass,  
My neighbor's Eleanor;  
As I am one of Nature's kin  
Her ways I must explore.

The rabbits mate within the wood,  
The sap runs in the tree;  
And what, my father, what is to—  
Become of Benny Lee?

## THE SIREN

### *A Study in Rhythm*

#### I

She bathed her locks where the sea-gull  
    bathes,  
She combed her hair with her lily hand,  
She dried her hair on the golden sand  
    By the breaking waves.

#### II

And ever singing her lullaby song,  
She dove and swam in the restless sea ;  
She twirled and whirled in the moaning sea,  
    Singing, singing wearily.

#### III

The sun arose, the sun went down,  
The moon broke through its clouded veil  
And as a ghost from out its pall,  
    Crept calm and pale.

#### IV

And she crawled from the foam of the break-  
    ing surf,  
She crawled to her home in the jagged rocks,  
Where the spray leaped high on the moss-  
    green turf

And dripped on her golden locks—  
Fell from the rock and the moss above  
On the curl of her matted locks.

## V

And here she slept in her hidden cave  
By the sound of the wave,  
For by day or by night would she creep very  
far  
From the moan and the groan of the  
wave—  
From the tone of the water's lave.

## VI

And the ships sailed by, and the ships sailed  
on  
To their distant home,  
For all paths end for those who work  
And those who roam,—  
For those who pray and those who play,  
And some leave many a looming reef—  
And some leave bubbles and foam.

## VII

And she swam in the waves, and her beautiful  
arms  
Rose tireless out of the sea—  
Her beautiful arms like the lilies of night,  
Rose loving and gracefully—

Rose slender and white in the dazzling light,  
Now quickly, now lazily.

## VIII

And her shoulders gleamed (where the ripples beamed  
Like dawn on the virgin snow),  
When her beautiful arms rose slow,  
And dipped in the luminous, sparkling main,  
And dripped as they rose again.

## IX

And she swam by the boats when they sailed  
in peace,  
She dove by the boats when they felt dis-  
tress;  
And she played in the billows that tossed and  
roared  
And covered her nakedness—  
Her beautiful slenderness.

## X

And the sailors listened and loved and longed,  
And leaped in the turbulent water—  
Like rats they leaped in the venomous sea  
For the love of the sea-king's daughter;  
But never a one who caught her—  
Not one of all who sought her.

## XI

And their bodies rolled where the swordfish  
swims—  
Grew slimy and green as they rolled and  
rolled,  
And the serpents twined on their helpless  
limbs,  
For their days were told,—  
Their days were numbered, and past, and  
gone,  
And their lips were cold.

## XII

And she saw them struggle and laughed with  
glee,  
She laughed with joy at their bootless strife,  
As they writhed and fought with the heartless  
sea  
For the love of life,—  
As they rose and fell on the panting sea  
And prayed for life.

## XIII

And the dawn came up with the sea-gull's cry,  
The evening fell with the setting sun,  
And the stars crept out to the milky-way  
When the day was done.

## XIV

And she sang of love in the twilight dim,  
She sang of love with her naked throat,  
And she covered her breast with a golden hair  
As she sang each note:

## XV

And the sea fish swam from their dark, dank  
caves,  
And the sand-crabs crawled from the sands of  
the sea,  
And the serpents hissed, as they tossed their  
heads,  
“O none so charming as she—as she,  
So tender and loving as she.”

## XVI

And a ship sailed by with a single mast,  
A single mast and a single sail;  
A ship with a single man sailed past  
Who leaned on a sea-wet rail.

## XVII

And she swam to his side with her playful  
song,  
And she dove in the waves as the dolphins  
dove;

But he mocked her beauty the whole night  
    long  
And scoffed at her song of love:

### XVIII

And she longed for the touch of his scornful  
    lips,  
She longed with a passion akin to hate,—  
She longed with a loneliness born of despair  
    For a swimming mate.

### XIX

And the waves rolled back from the bounding  
    prow  
As the ship went gliding upon the sea;  
And her locks fell over her neck and brow,  
    And the winds blew cool and free.

### XX

And a mad unrest on her spirits fell,  
As she played in the savage sea,  
And she lashed the waves to a milky foam  
    In her agony.

### XXI

And he sailed and sailed where his fancy led,  
    And laughed at her song of love:  
While the sun came out of the water's bed,  
    Or the stars came out from above.

## XXII

But she sang and sang through the night and day,  
And tossed in the billows as never before,  
And a madness fell on his beating heart  
And he leaped and he swam for shore:  
And she sang "I love," and he cried "I hate,"  
And she whispered "I love the more."

## XXIII

And his ship sailed on where the wild winds blew,  
Now here, now there; alone—alone!  
His ship sailed on without captain or crew  
And sank in the wild sea's moan.

## XXIV

And she wooed him long with her sensual way,  
And her passionate tune,  
And she sang him lullabies night and day,  
Till she fell aswoon.

## XXV

But she woke as we wake from a dream of love,  
And she longed to slumber forevermore,  
But she saw the clouds in the bright, blue sky,  
And heard the waves on the shore.

## XXVI

So they culled them moss for their nuptial bed,  
They gathered them shells of purple and  
pink,  
And yellow gold from the rudderless wrecks  
That leap, and quiver, and sink.

## XXVII

And they dove for coral, they dove for pearl,  
And all the wealth of the ocean wide,  
And they heaped it up in their rocky cave  
And slept by its glittering side.

## XXVIII

So they lived and loved as no others love,  
And they dove and played till their strength  
was gone—  
Till the muscles quivered along their arms,  
And their lips grew pale as the dawn.

## XXIX

And she longed for sleep and she longed for  
peace,  
While he slept on the waves of her breast,  
The billows, the waves of her beautiful  
breast,  
But she found no rest.  
And her bosom heaved through the night and  
day

As the tides of the fathomless sea,  
And she swooned and she woke alternately,  
But she found no rest.

### XXX

Now the winds, unlocked from their stormy  
home,  
Blew madly over the sea,  
Chilling the heart of the ruthless maid  
And waking its cruelty,  
And the lightning flashed and the thunder  
roared,  
And shook their cave and their glittering  
hoard,  
And swiftly she leaped from her soft, warm  
bed  
And dropped in the raging sea :  
And he followed her fearlessly.

### XXXI

And she lured him far in the teeth of the  
storm,  
And she gathered him fast in a locked em-  
brace,  
She lured him far on the treacherous sea  
And mockingly kissed his face.

### XXXII

And the bubbles rose as they sank and sank,  
And the bubbles burst as he fought for air;

But tighter and tighter around his throat  
She braided her golden hair,—  
Her beautiful locks of hair.

### XXXIII

Then she fled through the foam of the spum-  
ing wave  
To her lonely cave;  
The moon beamed forth and the stars ap-  
peared,  
And the billows ceased to rave,  
And she bowed her head on her round, white  
breast,  
She covered her face with her golden braids  
And crooned a stave,  
And the echoes rose and fell with the sea  
By her lover's grave.

### XXXIV

And the dawn arose with the fading stars,  
And she wept on her naked knee;  
And the ghost of the sun, when the day was  
done,  
Emerged from the sea.

## WOODLAND MELODIES

Oh ask me not where, when and why  
I write so many melodies;  
The summer clouds are in the sky,  
The boats are on the seas:  
The birds are nesting high and low,  
The butterfly is on the wing,  
The wild red roses bloom, and so,  
How can I help but sing?

---

Slowly the river winds its way,  
Silent, and deep, and still.  
The forest sings to it by day,  
At night, the whippoorwill.

And whence it came it does not know,  
It goes—it does not care,  
It is enough to live and flow,  
And Nature teaches where.

---

Dawn weaves a splendid majesty  
O'er village, hill and town;  
And eve a sweet serenity  
When the sun is down.

But in the night their glories meet—  
Commingle into one,  
As with you I find joy complete,  
When the day is done.

---

A million birds in summer time,  
Sing in the sunshine and the wet;

We hear their multifarious rhyme  
And pause and listen and—forget.

Forget because so many sing  
Upon the hills and on the sea;  
But ah! through winter's bitter sting,  
Do we forget the chickadee?

---

"She loves me, she loves me not:  
Two out of three," say I;  
Then straight I pluck another flower  
And cast the old one by.

"She loves me, she loves me not!"  
A foul, a bitter lie!  
And yet, although I know 'tis false,  
I lay me down and cry.

---

If I were but a tender flower  
That lived to drink the sun and shower,  
It were not much to droop and die  
Beneath the false and fickle sky.

Or if I were a bird that played  
About the woodland's sunny glade,  
I soon could choose another mate,  
But I am human and must—hate!

---

Through Nature's interchange of state,  
The seasons come, the seasons go;  
Now bringing back the mountain rose,  
Now hiding it beneath the snow.

But ah ! for you, my bonny Love,  
My heart forever cries with pain,  
For tho' the flowers come and go,  
You never can return again.

---

Tides flow out,  
And tides flow in.  
Quiet tides  
And tides of din.

Love flows in—  
Should love flow out,  
On love flows,  
Nor turns about.

---

No, no, implore me not to wait  
And woo from day to day;  
Fond words will never satiate  
Where love brooks no delay.

A petal or two from yonder rose,  
Which blooms so sweet and fair,  
Is worth how much—do you suppose—  
When all the rose is there?

---

Poets have been ever singing  
Of their happiness and woes,  
Of the loveliness discovered  
In a maiden or a rose.

But a maid as fair as Ellen  
Hath not been for ages long;

Or the land would be a garden  
And the world a burst of song.

---

A little bird is singing,  
Singing, singing in the night,  
And the forest branches whisper,  
And the forest sky is bright.

And I know that you are dreaming  
Dreams of one upon the sea;  
Oh! I would you knew the forest,  
For I would you dreamed of me.

---

Flow on, O lucid brook,  
Flow to the restless sea;  
Flow on until the ice  
Forbids your liberty.

Flow on, flow on, flow on,  
And not a moment waste!  
For ice and snow must come,  
And, till they come, make haste.

---

O sing no more, my bonny bird,  
O sing no more, I pray,  
Your Love is cooing o'er her nest,  
But mine has flown away.

Your little Love is true—is true,  
Your bonny Love is true!  
And oh! I would that you were I,  
Sweet bird, and I were you.

---

If it be folly, Sweet, to love,  
With pain and woe ensuing,  
Then weave three lilies in your hair,  
And I'll no more a wooing.

She wove three roses in her hair,  
Three roses red with sighing,  
And folly went in folly's quest  
And wisdom went a crying.

---

The snow is cold and white and deep,  
And winds across the brake,  
But oh! when balmy May returns  
The flowers will awake.

Oh bonny May, when blossoms spring  
On every bush and tree!  
When every bird enjoys its mate;  
—But who will mate with me?

---

Once more you come to me in dreams,  
Your hair falls all about my face,  
Your breast supports my head,—it seems  
Our lips meet in a long embrace.

Meet warm and loving, as of old,  
When June had flowered every lane,  
But I awoke—the night was cold,  
And snow was on the window pane.

---

The flowers are emblems  
Of hope, faith, and love:

And blossom as many  
As the stars above.

But snow is soon falling  
From out the cold sky,  
And love, faith, hope, wither,  
And crumble, and—die!

---

The night hath but a little while  
Before the day;  
The stars a moment's joy  
Ere they decay.

And as the night—the stars—the rose—  
Or passing shower,  
Love, sweeter far than all,  
Hath but an hour.

---

The wind is mad  
And the prairie moans,  
The lone tree shakes  
And the lone tree groans.

The lightnings flash  
And the wolves reply,—  
I would not hear  
If your lips were nigh.

---

How often have I wandered here  
Before my heart had found you,  
And listless gazed upon the scenes  
That everywhere surround you.

But, having known you, every wood  
And field that meets your glances,  
I never see or loiter by  
Save with the sweetest fancies.

---

The wood tells its tale with the song of the  
trees,  
And the sea with its song on the bars;  
And Day sings its story with sunlight and  
breeze,  
And Night with its song of the stars.

And the brook purls and purls o'er its pebbly  
route,  
To rushes that murmur and swing;  
But man, (only man) is afraid and mute,  
For he knows not of what to sing.

---

The Rose Bud winds its idle way  
Between the prairie grasses,  
And he who comes by night or day  
Will drink before he passes.

And yet, not one who leaneth o'er  
The sweetly winding hollow,  
Who thinks of those who went before  
Or of the ones to follow.

---

A little while, a little while  
And Nature wakens from her dream;  
A little while, a little while  
And birds will sing and brooks will gleam;

The child will mould its golden dreams,  
The withered face will beam and smile,  
And love will prove all that it seems,  
But—only for a little while.

---

I love sweet Rosaline,  
My Love with golden hair;  
I love my Love with all my heart  
For none with her compare.

\* \* \* \* \*

One year since we were wed,  
One year since we were one;  
One year since all my joys were lost  
And all my woes begun.

---

As perfume of peculiar charm,  
Or a forgotten melody  
Awakes a momentary dream,—  
An evanescent memory.

A fleeing cloud at night reveals  
Pallid Selene in its womb,  
But ere we view her charms entire  
Again she vanishes in gloom.

---

O the forest is most fragrant  
In the evening and the morn;  
When the mists are on the waters,  
When the dews are on the thorn.

And most tender your caresses  
Ere your eyes are closed in sleep,

And when first the dawn awakes you  
From your slumbers long and deep.

---

Sing on, sing on, fair maid,  
Companion to the night;  
The evening shadows fade,  
The mists are growing white.

Pour forth your happiness!  
Live on from day to day,  
And never know nor miss  
What I shall take away.

---

There is a wild tenderness  
Within the spring-bird's song:  
A certain mild loveliness  
Where many roses throng.

Yet not a spring-bird's melody  
Nor a rose upon the lawn,  
But seems to whisper timidly  
"Where has your loved one gone?"

---

I should believe in Paradise  
And in the angels, too,  
And in a God beyond the skies  
As all good people do.

But such a sweet entanglement,  
To me, is far from true,  
And so I take what Nature sent,  
And am content with you.

---

Our fears, our passions, and our hopes  
Are like the petals of the flowers,  
That blossom with the singing birds,  
And droop with Autumn showers;

Until the stalk is left alone  
To dream of April's sun and rain;—  
I wonder when that, too, is dead,  
If it will bloom again.

---

I would not dare to say I love,  
Nor dare I call you mine,  
For if love speaks ere love is ripe,  
Then love must pine.

But when you yield to me your breast,  
White as the snowy dove,  
Then I shall whisper through the night  
“I love—I love!”

---

What the spring is to the parched one,  
What the stream is to the mead,  
What the sun is to the flower,  
What the rain is to the seed;

Love is this, (and more) to women,  
And a mutual love they claim,  
Or they wither like the blossoms,  
Or they grasp at it in shame.

---

Stars for the night,  
And the sun for the day;

Birds for the wood,  
And the flowers for May.

Dew for the rose,  
And the rose for the bee;  
I for my Jenny,  
And Jenny for me.

---

I would not proffer you a rose,  
Its thorn might pierce your heart;  
But take—oh take this water-lily  
Ere we part;

'Tis all I have, and God himself  
Could ask or give no more—  
To make you as the forest lily  
Beautiful and pure.

---

The snow fell all about her head,  
And lay upon her lips and breast  
That knew nor joy nor peace nor rest,  
For they had purchased wine and bread.

And lo! as death gave her release,  
A lily in the South was born,  
A lily fragrant as the morn,  
A water-lily, singing "Peace!"

---

If the sun withdrew its blessing,  
If the rose disdained to blow;  
If the birds forgot their singing;  
If the brooks refused to flow;

If our faith, our prayers, our longings  
Proved but vanity and rue—  
'Twere enough to have your kisses,  
'Twere enough to live for you.

---

I shall wander with the days  
Alone and far from thee;  
Where happily I can forget  
In lands beyond the sea.

But should we meet in after years  
When time concealed my pain,  
My heart would burst and bursting show  
That all but love is vain.

---

The rain must fall,  
The rose must blow,  
The lark must sing,  
And the brook must flow.

And love must bloom,  
And love must reign,  
But what is love,  
When it blooms in vain !

---

O tend'rest flower of the year,  
First flower of spring !  
Sweetest of any bird we hear,  
First bird to sing !

O star of eve ! fairest of all  
The stars above !

Like Her—when memories recall  
Our earliest love.

---

Dew is sparkling on the grasses,  
And the lilies are asleep;  
Birds have sung their evening masses  
Linking steep to steep.

Long 'twill be ere dawn is breaking,  
All the world is fast asleep:  
When I think of its awaking,  
Silently I weep.

---

Remember thee! Remember thee!  
I cannot well forget:  
Nothing hath altered but thy heart,  
Our wood is standing yet.

And while a single snow-drift winds  
About our trysting tree,  
And while a single snow-bird sings,  
I must remember thee.

---

She grew three tender flowers,  
She nourished them with care;  
She guarded them—caressed them,  
And shielded them with prayer.

They were her shame and sorrow,  
They broke her mother's pride,  
And now—ah! now she murmurs,  
“I would they all had died.”

---

What tho' the winter rages loud  
And strikes the lilies down?  
What tho' the lightnings flash and leap  
And burn the little town?

What tho' the surf forever breaks  
Upon the cliffs and sand?  
We tremble, and we see and hear,  
But do we understand?

---

Come lay your head upon my breast,  
And so be kissed to sleep;  
Forget I taught you how to love,  
Forget to weep.

And dream of youth and happiness,—  
Of love in all its beauty,  
Nor wake to learn that marriage turns  
Our love—to duty.

---

The little birds sleep on the sheltered bough,  
And the moon comes out of its cave;  
And the stars grow dim on the heavens' brow  
And the sun leaps forth from the wave.

So the world rolls on and is never still,  
Rolls on to its destiny;  
And the pine trees sing from the cold, bleak  
hill,  
And the waves sing back from the sea.

---

'Tis finished—all our love—our vow!  
Your smiles belied;

Another's kiss is on your brow  
Where mine have died.

And now strange shadows of unrest  
About me creep;  
And oh! I know not which is best,—  
To laugh or weep.

---

Each morn I rise to view the hills  
That stretch from east to west;  
With happiness my bosom thrills  
Until the day's at rest.

For you will come to me by night,—  
My dreams are all of you!  
And not until the dawn of light  
My freedom I pursue.

---

Although the wolf howls at our door,  
And north winds blow in angered mood,  
The birds, somewhere, their strains outpour,  
And somewhere violets scent the wood.

And one may live to find them dear,  
Another's ear may count each strain;  
And see, our little flower here,  
Sure we've not lived nor loved in vain.

---

A lily floated on a stream,  
Immaculate and fair;  
My Lady, with her listless hand,  
Had brushed it unaware.

And so she came and touched my heart,  
Singing her careless air,  
And now I know what, to the waves,  
The lily sayeth in prayer.

---

The world must call and call  
For those of tender feeling;  
There is no end to love and play  
Till death has its revealing.

For love is like a river  
That all things sail upon,  
And glides by wood and mead and fen,  
But on—for God's sake, on!

---

Out of your eyes I drink the sweet  
Of love's first offering,  
As he, who, weary with the heat,  
Drinks from a spring.

And his is but a draught or two  
From the refreshing wave;  
But oh, the more I drink from you,  
The more I crave.

---

The time is swift in passing, Love,  
And not an hour will stay,  
And not a moment but is lost  
While making such delay.

And tho' more hours will come and go,  
As good and kind and fair,

Not one but, as it steals away,  
Is gone beyond repair.

---

The ragged cliffs hang o'er the sea  
Where foaming billows dash and roar,  
And screaming gulls forever soar,  
Restless and free.

And o'er my heart there falls a spell;  
Whether a longing—in my breast—  
Of peacefulness or of unrest—  
I can not tell.

---

A weary wand'rer may rest  
Beneath the cooling shades,  
And joyfully hear the sweet birds sing  
Their serenades.

But on what path is shady tree,  
Or soft birds' twitter,  
When in a heart is misery  
That love is bitter.

---

I bloom in the sunshine,  
I laugh in its ray;  
Then fall from the rose vine  
And wither away.

They see me there lying,  
Yet calmly walk by;  
They see me there dying,  
Nor offer a sigh.

---

## ODE TO THE HERMIT THRUSH

Thou bard of Eve! companion to the first-born star,  
Lone echo of the wood;  
I hear thee singing from afar,  
Thou gem of solitude!

Out from secreted tangles of the humid vales  
Thy song is borne,  
The first to say that daylight fails,  
And first to speak of morn.

Sing—sing, Thou forest spirit of the eventide!  
Echo of Nature's pain,  
And strew thy ditties far and wide  
Where shadows flood the plain.

It was such notes as thine fell on the hungered ear  
When Orpheus felt the strings,  
And Grecian waters, far and near,  
Grew sweet with whisperings.

A distant bell is tinkling where the aimless herd  
Follows thy plaintive tune,  
While thou art singing, phantom bird,  
To the pallid moon:

Which heraldeth the night ere yet the fevered day  
Sinks to its close,—

Ere yet the dew hath kissed its way  
To the waiting rose.

And is thy song of love, and of rebuked de-  
sire,  
Of kisses kissed in vain,  
Save to enshroud thy heart with fire  
And burn thee in its pain?

Or art thou wailing for an evanescent race,  
With tender moan,  
Which leaves nor memory nor trace  
Save here and there a stone?

The odorous air is thrilling with thy melody  
The eve-tide long,  
One star is trembling in the sky  
To hear thy song.

And who can tell what other ears are list'ning  
too,  
That long we fancied dead,  
Who walk the darkness through and through  
With silent tread.

Who haunt the sacred groves where once a  
village stood  
And once their arrows gleamed,  
When, like a thousand eagles from the wood,  
They fearless streamed!

O could I tell but half the thoughts which  
crowd my brain  
Like clouds within the sky,

While thou art chanting thy sweet strain  
So melodiously!

But ah! the sweeter grows thy tune, dumber  
my lute—

Silent before the God of song!—  
Carried, while all amaze and mute,  
His liquid waves along!

O that each vaunted bird could ply his  
vaunted art!

When all were still again,  
Thy notes alone would haunt the heart  
Like perfume after rain.

Sing! Sing! thou honey-throated bard, sing on  
or weep;

I know not which it be,  
The witchèd murmurings of sleep  
Are in thy melody.

Sing! Sing! forevermore, sing through the  
list'ning night,

Sing all thy pains away!  
Sing till a red rose springs to light  
With each successive lay.

Sing!—But thy song is done; the dark hath  
bade thee cease,

Thou woodland sprite,—  
But oh what gentle touch of peace  
Will linger through the night!

---

O wonderful May of the mountains !  
O beautiful May of the vales !  
When flowers awake in the forest,  
And bobolinks sing in the swales.

When woodpeckers drum on the maples,  
And bull-frogs are piping their lay,  
And skies are so full of the sunshine,  
And snow banks have melted away.

O wonderful, wonderful Spring-time !  
When Nature is bursting in bloom,  
When May has awoke from her slumbers,  
And broken the locks of her tomb.

O wonderful, wonderful Spring-time !  
O tenderest bud of the spray !  
O the bursting of green on the mountains !  
In the wonderful, wonderful May !

---

O thou sweet hours of mad deliciousness,  
When Nature hath Her beauty reinstored ;  
When lips are anxious for the favored kiss,  
And long to taste the honey of Love's  
hoard :

When age is youth, and youth assumeth age,  
And there is folly in the very dust ;  
When twittering swallows end their pilgrim-  
age,  
And the wild wood yieldeth her perfumed  
trust.

Now the great snow-drifts melt upon the hills  
And Mother Earth awakens from her  
dream;

The enraptured song sparrow each bosom  
thrills,  
A-singing by the pussy-willowed stream.

And great, white clouds appear, and floating  
by,  
Drop amorous showers from the lucid sky.

---

Fair star that leaneth from the heavens' rim  
As a pale lady from her hallowed bower,  
Waking the wood-folk with thy magic pow-  
er

And smiling till the shadows have grown dim,  
And the night-spiders' weavings—frail and  
slim—

Are swaying as they hang from flower to  
flower:

Oh star!—oh star of dawn! what is thy  
dower?

What recompense hast thou from us, or Him?

Teach me to give as thou thyself art given,  
The rest I know;—the days—the hours—  
the years

Of fruitless toil, barren to Earth or Heaven,  
O solitary star hast thou no fears?

Thou art beloved, perhaps, by wood and sea,  
But ah! I fear these, even, know not me!

Would that our love were as yon budding flower  
Which Nature made so fresh, so pure, and sweet,  
Fed by the passion in the sunlight's heat,  
And living but to kiss the passing hour.  
O that our tears were, like the noonday shower,  
To renovate the heart's least falt'ring beat  
And ope our inmost petals, Dear, to greet  
The love kiss falling in our sheltered bower.

And, as that flower's life, so short and pure,  
Which dies before one petal falls away,  
So let us live while youth and love endure;  
And ere one youthful passion shall decay,  
To fold the night while yet our moon is high,  
And so, my Sweet, while yet we love—to die!

Go sleep, fair Rose,  
Your rest is won;  
The north wind blows,  
The clouds are dun.

How few can tell,  
How few can say  
They lived as well  
From day to day.

The snow will creep  
Your petals o'er,  
And you must sleep—  
And bloom no more.









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